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## MEMORANDUM

Date: August 28, 2007

To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners

From: R.J. Cardin, Director

Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R.J. Cardin", is written over the "Re:" line of the memorandum.

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the August Director's Summary.

### **Superintendent Report**

**Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA):** The Park Supervisor has been working with Dr. Scott Abella of University of Nevada in Las Vegas and Judy Springer of Northern Arizona University (NAU) to finish a manuscript regarding the results of our burn treatment at Cave Creek Regional Park (CCRP). A presentation will be made this fall at a NAU symposium regarding this action.

The Park Supervisor volunteered to work with the developer and the local Land Trust regarding developing a master plan for managing an important spring (Apache Spring) located along the regional trail between SCRCA and CCRP.

The Interpretive Ranger has completed the final installation of ironwood trees (6); this action is to re-create the bosque in a disturbed area north of the old ranch site.

**Usery Mountain Regional Park:** 15 interpretive programs were conducted in July with the Strawberry Full Moon Hike being the most popular.

Upcoming offerings for the last of warm months will be early morning and evening programs to beat the heat. For example: Early morning brisk walking and interpretive strolls about the technical aspects of the Arizona monsoon season.

We are continuing to construct replacement archery target butts and keeping up with stocking/changing out targets during pre-hunting season.

19 interpretive programs were conducted in August including outreaches to elementary schools and a privately lead moon hike.

Upcoming offerings for September are Scaly Scavenger Hunts for Kids, a Dog Day Hike, the Harvest Moon Hike and the Fitness Folly on World Gratitude Day.

**Cave Creek Regional Park:** The Office Assistant continues to help with weekend hikes and has led at least one hike each weekend.

Staff is coordinating efforts for the October 6<sup>th</sup> "Unmark your Park" program with clean-up areas at Cave Creek and Adobe Dam.

**McDowell Mountain Regional Park:** Summer storms reeked havoc on the park and its trail system in the later half of July. Two very strong storms hit McDowell and temporarily closed the roads north and south of the park. Internally, the Pemberton, North and Granite Trails were washed out in areas and a tremendous amount of soft sand was deposited on the trails at all the wash crossings. Where the Park roads crossed washes within the park, as much as 6-8 inches of sand was left on the pavement. MCDOT promised to remove the sand when time permitted. Before MCDOT could respond, the tractor assigned to McDowell was repaired and staff worked tirelessly removing sand from all the parks paved roads.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park received a grant from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to add vegetation and signs to the Pemberton Pond area. The \$3,000 grant with matching labor from the park make the project a \$5,000 enhancement to this soon to be, key area of the park.

Work is just underway on a re-design of the Pemberton Pond Wildlife Viewing Blind. The original external blind is being redesigned and moved within an existing old metal water tank located near the new Pemberton Pond. Much of the construction of this blind will be paid for with a grant from the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

The Park Supervisor met with community representatives from Rio Verde to discuss the lack of vegetation resulting from the Hydro seeding done by Salt River Project (SRP). SRP made the promise on several occasions that they would hydro seed to restore the appearance of the disturbed areas while maintaining access. Nothing has or is growing as a result of the previous work by SRP. A letter will be sent asking for addition rehab work to be done by SRP along the Rio Verde section.

MCDOT and contractor FNF Construction will begin adding a five foot wide bicycle path to both sides of McDowell Mountain Road on September 4, 2007. The project is expected to be completed by the middle of October.

**San Tan Mountain Regional Park:** Scales and Tails program was presented by visiting park ranger Amy Ford (from the DOC). The program caught the attention of many visitors, over half of which were new to San Tan. Amy taught the curious group about the wildlife in the area and displayed several animals such as a king snake, gopher snake, and desert tortoise.

"Birding for Newbies", also lead by Amy Ford, brought in some new visitors to the park and introduced them to the sights and sounds of the common birds found at San Tan.

"Paws for a Moment" Dog Hike attracted several hikers and some of their furry friends to learn about dog safety and trail obedience.

"Better than Coffee" Fitness Hike had motivated attendees climb to the top of the Goldmine Mountain to not only gain a physical workout, but take in the beautiful views atop the mountain.

Other August events include a Moonlit Bike Ride on August 24 Moonlit Hike on August 25 and National Dog Day Hike on August 26.

An Eagle Scout group and park staff removed 152 fence posts from the park area; this was a huge visual impact and a welcomed pleasing improvement.

**Estrella Mountain Regional Park:** El Rio Education plot dedication scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup> at 8am. The plot is a demonstration area to remove Salt Cedar and replace them with native vegetation. If this proves successful, further plantings will occur in the future. If it is unsuccessful or marginally successful we hope to learn new information that will help in improving future re-vegetation projects.

**Lake Pleasant Regional Park:** The annual "Get Wet Paddle" was held on Saturday morning, August 4, and included a fun water cannon battle, which attracted new visitors.

Scorpion Hunt won "Best Program" and award will be presented at the APRA conference.

Campground Cook-off planning has begun. Staff are generating quotes for expenses to determine a budget. The categories are chili, stew and dessert. A tentative decision for local band that draws spectators is Rendezvous.

### **Marketing Update**

In August, the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department was notified by Valley Forward that two nomination submissions had been selected as finalists for the *27<sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Excellence Awards Program*. The Spur Cross Trail System was selected as a finalist in the Open Space and Connectivity, Trails Category and the Interpretive Ranger Programs had been selected as a finalist for the Environmental Education, Communication Public Sector Category. Finalists are guaranteed an award of Merit and are considered for the first-place Crescordia Award. All award winners will be announced at the banquet on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Parks is also in the process of submitting nominations for Westmarc's *15<sup>th</sup> Annual Best of the West Awards*. Submissions include the Desert Outdoor Center's Lake Pleasant Camp (education category) and Interpretive Ranger Programs (attractions, destinations and tourism category). Winners will be announced at the awards dinner on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Contract Updates**

**Lake Pleasant** - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued the 404 Permit on August 2<sup>nd</sup>; Ground excavation began for Scorpion Bay Marina and Yacht Club on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Paradise Valley** - Casey at the Bat: Amendment Four was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. This document amends the termination date of the existing Agreement from November 4, 2008 to June 30, 2008.

### **Grant Updates**

**McDowell Mountain Regional Park** - State Parks, who provided funding for our new restroom facility at the competitive track, inspected the project and were extremely impressed. They will be sending us remaining funds so we will be able to consider this project complete.

**Cave Creek Regional Park** - The Go John trail, funded by State Parks has been inspected and hiked by the State Parks Grant Coordinator and staff from the Trails Crew and Cave Creek Park. State Parks stated this trail was a pleasure to hike. This is now a completed project.

The new grant cycle is soon approaching us. The Grant Coordinator will be attending the Heritage Fund Game and Fish workshop August 27<sup>th</sup>. We're working with the Parks to submit several applications for Urban Wildlife and Wildlife Educational funds.

### **Coming and Going in Human Resources**

The following people recently left Parks; David McCaig, temporary Trails Technician with the Trails Crew; Andrew Fish, Trails Planner with the Trails Crew; Brooke Disney, Interpretive Ranger at McDowell; and Paul Marusich, Park Supervisor at Estrella.

The following people have been hired at Parks; Penny Hatten, Procurement Specialist at Headquarters and Frank Wodiuk, Parks Intern.

We are currently recruiting for; Park Supervisor for Estrella Regional Park and Interpretive Ranger for McDowell Regional Park.

Interviews were held for the Park Office Assistant (Bi-lingual English/Spanish) at Estrella Regional Park. A person has been chosen for the position and will start in September.

Interviews for the Electrician with the Construction/Trails Crew are being held on August 29, 2007.